



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SEVEN, EIGHT, AND NINE YEARS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.—*Concluded*

E. C. BROOKS

Professor of Education, Trinity College, Durham, N.C.

Program IV is from the sixth grade of a school in the South Atlantic States. It is shown in table on p. 83.

Here we find an entirely different program. The grade is divided into two sections. The recitation period for all subjects except spelling is thirty minutes, and the study period thirty minutes. The total number of daily exercises for each section, exclusive of opening exercises, is six. In four of these the sections recite together, and in two, separately. This is true for every day except Friday, when the number of recitations is seven, but the two sections recite together on four subjects. Three of them, however, require no previous preparation.

This program exhibits the work of a one-session school which runs from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., with only one recess during the day. The same number of subjects is found here that is exhibited in the other programs, but they are distributed through the week, and all do not appear daily. Whenever they do come, however, more time is devoted to each. For instance, the B section devotes thirty minutes to the preparation of arithmetic and thirty minutes to the recitation, making an hour to this subject, but arithmetic appears only four times a week. In Program III fifty minutes are devoted to arithmetic, including the study period, and it comes five times a week. History alternates with geography, each coming three times a week.

Any schoolman can compare these daily programs and draw his own conclusions. Evidently this has been done already, and the results are individual rather than general conclusions. Going from the first to the last program, both the content and the organization are vastly different, and the results must be different. In these four schools the working-out of the courses of study is as

PROGRAM IV

Time	9:15-9:30	9:30-10:00	10:00-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-11:30	11:30-12:00	12:00-12:30	12:30-1:00	1:00-1:30	1:30-2:00
Monday	A and B Writing	A Math.	B Math.	A and B Comp.	A Gram.	B Gram.	Recess	A Geog.	B Geog.	A and B 15 15 Spelling
Tuesday	A and B Writing	A Math.	B Math.	A and B Drawing	A Lit.	B Lit.	Recess	A History	B History	A and B 15 15 Spelling
Wednesday	A and B Writing	A Math.	B Math.	A and B 15 15 Spelling	A Gram.	B Gram.	Recess	A Geog.	B Geog.	A and B Drawing
Thursday	A and B Writing	A Math.	B Math.	A and B 15 15 Spelling	A Lit.	B Lit.	Recess	A and B Music	A History	B History
Friday	A and B Writing	A and B Comp.	A History	B History	A and B 15 15 Spelling	A and B Music	Recess	A Geog.	B Geog.	A and B Drawing

different as if they came from different nations with different purposes and ideals. The first school presents twelve different subjects, placing much emphasis on arithmetic, and about equal emphasis on all other subjects. The organization of the day's work is such that the child has very little time for private study or individual work. He has little opportunity to try his strength. The excessive number of recitations makes it impossible for him to prepare all the work out of school, and little opportunity is given for preparation in school. Such a condition makes it necessary for the teacher to aid considerably in the daily preparation.

In the second school the number of subjects is somewhat reduced. Here we find eight subjects emphasized, but there are six other periods when the classes are engaged in some kind of work or exercise; and, notwithstanding the reduction, the number of recitation periods is about the same, if we include gymnastics and general work as a recitation period. So the attempt is made to get in the same number of subjects, or to make the content about the same. In order to do it the recitation period is reduced, ranging from ten to twenty minutes, with the same time devoted to study. Notwithstanding the two sections, it would appear from the short recitation periods that they are kept about together.

The third school swings still farther away. Here the content is materially different. Five subjects are emphasized, and fifty minutes are devoted to each. The other three subjects require little or no preparation. One of them is included in the opening exercises. The fourth school resembles to some extent the third type; but it makes the difference between the extremes still more pronounced.

These four types are not confined to sections or localities. Take New England for instance. In one school we find nineteen daily recitations in the third grade, while another, less than two hours' journey, almost the next neighboring town, has only five daily recitations for the same grade. If we go west of the Rocky Mountains we could spend the morning in a school with only five daily recitations in the eighth grade, and in the afternoon of the same day visit another with twelve daily recitations in the same grade. If we should come south we can select a school with four

daily recitations in the fifth grade, and almost within speaking distance select another with ten daily recitations in the same grade. Likewise we find the one-session plan as well as the two-session plan in different parts of the country. The size of the town, the age of entrance, and the length of the grammar school have little influence on the number of daily recitations.

This is not the only interesting aspect of the grammar school, and here again we could make some classifications: (1) Those schools that begin with only three or four daily recitations in the first grade and increase the number each year until we find in the eighth year eleven and twelve daily recitations; (2) those schools that begin with a large number like fifteen, eighteen, or nineteen, and reduce the number gradually to four or five in the eighth grade; (3) those that retain the same number in all grades. Some run four or five throughout the eight grades, while others run as many as eleven and twelve; and again we are unable to make a local application of these several divisions, for we find them in every section of the country.

I wish to notice only one other classification: (1) Those that devote only about two and one-half hours a day to the first grade and gradually increase the length of the day until it registers about five hours; and (2) those that have the same length of day for each grade. And thus we might go on classifying until we have as many classifications as there are schools.

III. THE PROMOTION OF STUDENTS

In the long run of years from the first grade to the last year of the high school, this question naturally arises: What opportunity is given students to pass from one grade to another? All admit that a seven-year-old child will reach the high school ahead of the six-year-old child, and the six-year-old child ahead of the five-year-old child. The amount of work for each grade is different in different schools. If in the fifth grade of one school there are five different subjects daily, and in the fifth grade of another school twelve different subjects daily, what is the relative standing of these two sets of pupils? Suppose this difference continues, and we find that it does, through the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades,

there is necessarily a better opportunity for the former set to reach the high school earlier, and to know more of these five particular subjects than the students of the other school, for more than twice the time is devoted to them. If these five subjects should be reading, language, mathematics, history, and geography, the former students would probably be better able to continue these subjects through the high school than would the latter, for they would have more knowledge of them when they enter the high school. But this in itself is not the greatest blessing; for another group of subjects might be selected that would enrich the life of the pupil just as much and give him a background that would be just as helpful in pursuing the high-school work.

This question may be asked: What influence do these systems have on the mental habits of the child? Do they all give him power and skill as well as knowledge? Is it better to present short lessons on many subjects? Or, in other words, is it better to know a little about many things than much about a few things? Which produces more knowledge, power, skill, and character?

When a child has twelve recitations without a break, less the recesses, the teacher must necessarily do the greater part of the work for the child. She drops into the lecture method or the telling method and does much that the child should do unaided and alone. And whenever and wherever this is done, the child is robbed of a certain amount of mental activity, and he is thereby the weaker, since he is deprived of the skill in doing things and the pleasure that come to one conscious of the fact that he is doing things.

As a rule the method of advancing pupils from one grade to another is by semiannual promotions; but this fact conveys very little information. In the first three schools mentioned above we find semiannual promotions. In the school with thirteen daily periods we find ten minutes devoted to history; and in the school with eight periods we find twenty-five minutes devoted to the same subject. In the one a broad curriculum is run eight years, in the other a narrow curriculum is run eight years.

The older schools when they were established had probably only a few subjects for the child to study. We know something about the history of the course of study, since the last twenty-five

years have crowded a number of new studies into the curriculum. They have been forced in, so to speak, and the schoolman in many instances, not knowing how to make his selections, nor how to group his subjects, has put them all in the curriculum, and has given them all equal importance. By degrees the study period has been taken away, and the child is put through the mill of nineteen daily recitations. It is impossible, then, for one child to proceed faster than another. The content has choked the organization. The length of the term has been increased from six years to seven years, to eight years, to nine years, in order that they all may go through together and the wonder to me is, when I observe the crowded curriculum, that it is not ten years, eleven years, twelve years, and so on indefinitely. But the study of child development has taught us this, that a child when it reaches thirteen or fourteen years of age is capable of doing work found in the high school, and this has probably stopped the lengthening of the grammar school.

The old teacher confined the school to mere getting knowledge. All teaching reduced itself to an examination of the child's knowledge, to be sure that it got the exact amount prescribed, and there was generally a stern incentive to meet the demands. In the growth of the graded schools a new idea entered, that of assimilating what has been acquired. Many of the graded schools then swung to the other extreme and ceased to emphasize the value of the self-activity of the child in acquiring knowledge, losing sight of the fact that its mental activity in acquiring knowledge within the scope of its experience and understanding will so facilitate the assimilation of this knowledge that much less extra assistance from the teacher is necessary. The child by its own efforts makes the teacher's efforts much more fruitful. The immature mind has many ways of developing itself through its own reactive power. It responds to numerous stimuli from without, and many of the strongest stimuli can come to the child when it is not on recitation. This fact is ignored by many of the schools, which have followed the line of least resistance in securing knowledge, being led far afield by that *ignis fatuus*, the doctrine of interest, and leaving the child basking in a lazy sunshine of soft pedagogics.

In tracing the course of study as it works through the grades, another very interesting fact is noted. Here are two schools, each claiming to be eight years in length. It is not unusual to find the content of the third grade of one in the fourth grade of the other, and if we trace them into the eighth grade we notice that the differences vanish, and they march together through the last year. Equal lengths here would appear to be the result of imitation. If we compare the course in a seven-year school with that of an eight-year school we shall find in almost every case that the course in the fourth year of the one is nearly or quite a year higher than that of the other, which leads me to quote what one superintendent of a seven-year grammar school says: "About two-thirds of the pupils entering my first grade are held two years in this grade." This is really an eight-year school labeled a seven-year school. Suppose we take this curriculum that requires two years for two-thirds of the pupils (this is in the state of North Carolina where pupils enter at six) and put it in a Massachusetts school, where students enter at five years of age, and where a large percentage of the first-year pupils come from homes where the English language is barely spoken, and I suspect that the difference in the time of working out this curriculum through the grades would be more than a year. It is impossible to discuss here the influence of foreign-born population on the school. There seems to be, however, no general plan, really no guide save the personal opinion of the superintendent, possibly influenced by some favorite school or schoolman.

A very interesting fact in studying the progress of pupils through the grades is the absence of anything like definite information; yet from that furnished we find the widest possible variations. Many schools can tell the number of pupils that repeat as much as or more than half of a grade, and lose a year or more; but only a few have any information about the time gained. In one school, 25 per cent of the pupils repeat a year's work, and the superintendent, although he has a seven-year course, prefers an eight-year course. Another school shows that 30 per cent of the pupils gain a year, yet this school has an eight-year course and prefers an eight-year course. And instances like these might be multiplied indefinitely.

An interesting situation is found in one western school. In the first grade, 50 per cent repeat a year; second grade, 40 per cent; third grade, 30 per cent; fourth grade, 25 per cent; fifth grade, 20 per cent; sixth grade, 15 per cent; seventh grade, 10 per cent; and eighth grade, 5 per cent. Here we find an eight-year grammar school. We find similar conditions elsewhere, although the percentage is not quite so large. In a certain Pennsylvania school, 39 per cent gain more than a year, while 15 per cent lose more than a year. Here the length of the grammar school is eight years; but, in another school of the same state, 20 per cent lose on an average a year's work; but the length here is seven years. In one school in Massachusetts the length is nine years, and 20 per cent lose a year, yet the superintendent prefers an eight-year course. In a southern school we find another peculiar situation. In the first grade, 6 per cent lose a year; second grade, 6 per cent; third grade, 7 per cent; fourth grade, 6 per cent; fifth grade, 16 per cent; sixth grade, 16 per cent; seventh grade, 25 per cent. And a number of instances similar to this might be quoted.

All of this seems to prove nothing except that the individual superintendent has various and sundry perplexing questions that beset his soul, and results are as they are because of these soul perplexities. The child, the content, the organization, aye, there's the rub! Child nature is being studied; the content of the school is being analyzed; and the organization of the whole machinery is being worked over. The three should be studied together, not separately, for it is in the combination that we detect gross errors.

SUMMARY

After observing these many facts relative to the grammar school we come back to the question, is a four-year high school that rests on a seven-year grammar school equal to a four-year high school that rests on an eight-year grammar school? If the seven-year grammar school presented only a few subjects daily to students who enter the first grade at seven years of age, and should give the students opportunity to do the greatest amount of work in these subjects and to grow as rapidly as their health and capacity would permit; and if the eight-year grammar school

should present fifteen or eighteen subjects daily; should permit students to enter the first grade at five years of age; should give the students only ten or fifteen minutes on recitation, and offer no opportunity for promotion beyond the mass; then I should say that a seven-year grammar school would be superior to an eight-year grammar school.

On the contrary, if an eight-year grammar school should present only a few subjects daily; should require steady, vigorous work of all pupils in these few subjects; and should permit students to complete the entire work as their several capacities would permit; and if the seven-year grammar school should present the other conditions—of a large number of subjects, no study periods, no possible means of advancing faster than the mass; then I should say that the eight-year grammar school would be superior. But we are unable to make any such classifications. All the evils and defects of all the schools can be found in either class—those of a seven-, eight-, or a nine-year grammar school. Again, it is difficult to tell what is a seven-year grammar school or an eight-year grammar school; for it is frequently the case that the seven-year school holds pupils in the first grade two years, while it is equally true that the eight-year school permits a large percentage of its pupils to complete the course in seven years; therefore a seven-year grammar school may be really an eight-year school, and a so-called eight-year grammar school may be really a seven-year grammar school.

But this seems to be a fair conclusion, that we do not yet know the meaning of education, and what children are capable of doing; for if it is the right process to take a class of forty pupils thirteen years of age and present the complete circle of knowledge to them in a list of subjects that numbers fifteen, eighteen, or nineteen, and to keep the pupils turning from subject to subject, giving them largely impressions and entertainment, and to prohibit all home work, then it is not the right process to confine the same pupils to a curriculum containing only five subjects, with long study periods, both in school and at home; yet both of these plans prevail to such an extent and under so many different conditions that it is next to impossible to take the results of the school and tell which is the better process.

Our personal opinions may be very pronounced. Certainly, the men who supervise these courses have personal opinions, but they are largely personal and not general. Therefore, I am leaving the question where I asked it. The answer is an individual one, not general. It may be wrong, it may be right, and there are instances enough to prove either. Let me say here that we find in every section of the country schools that seem to be working away and trying to understand the reason for the large or the small number of subjects; and the tendency seems to be toward the smaller number.

INFLUENCE ON THE HIGH SCHOOL

We come with these varying results from so many varying conditions to the high school. Here we find some uniformity. There are enough contrasts, however, to attract attention; but these are in the main confined to the city schools where the grammar school has had such a checkered career. Since the States have become alive to the necessity of public high schools there is a distinct tendency toward uniformity. This question has been thoroughly discussed, however, by Dr. Edwin R. Snyder, of Teachers College, Columbia University, in "The Legal Status of the Rural High School." Colleges for years have published their entrance requirements, and high-school men have planned their courses to meet them. This has had a tendency to carry college methods into high-school classes. And here the two extremes meet—the grammar-school methods of thirteen or nineteen recitations a day, and college methods of three or four recitations a day. So our high schools have one of these tendencies. We find them carrying six and seven daily recitations of forty to fifty minutes each. This fills the entire day, and there is no break from opening exercise to the last recitation period. This is a continuation of certain grammar-school methods. On the other hand, we find high schools carrying only three or four recitations a day, each followed by a study period. This is approaching college methods. One superintendent of an eleven-year system writes that his four-year high school can present seventeen units certainly, eighteen possibly. That means that his pupils carry thirty

to thirty-five recitations weekly, an impossible task; while another high school that has a nine-year grammar school carries in the high school only three periods daily, and takes five years to complete the courses. But the tendency is toward uniformity in high schools. Fifteen hours a week seems to be the average—that means three hours a day in the high school against five hours in the grammar school.

Another noticeable fact is that the grammar school comes up to the high school with fifteen daily recitations, and then drops to three and four daily recitations. Likewise, students come up to the high school having been accustomed to a recitation period of about fifteen or twenty minutes and then rise to a recitation period of forty-five minutes. The pupils come to the high school having had the teacher to aid in the preparation. In fact, the recitation period has been of such a nature in many instances that the teacher did the greater part of the thinking for the class until the class moved into the high school; here pupils are required to make individual preparation with little assistance from the teacher.

Taking a general view of the entire “educational ladder” from the first grade of the grammar school to the senior year of the college, we are confronted with a loss of students in the fifth and sixth grades, especially; another break comes in the first year of the high school. We notice a distinct falling-off through the four years of the high school; we are told over and over again that the character of the college student has defects sufficient to cause many writers and speakers to question the efficiency of the college. In it all and through it all this seems to be a very pertinent question: Do we yet know how to handle large numbers of students? Do we know the value of a subject, how it enters the life current of the individual, and what influence it has on the child? In making this study of the grammar school, this final question may be asked: What influence does this disorganized and seemingly purposeless work of the grammar school have on the subsequent years of the child when he is found in the high school and in the college?